Stories for Summer Days and Winter Nights.

ALLY'S BIRTH-DAY.

LONDON:

GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

Two-pence.

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GOING TO THE HILLS.

ALLY'S BIRTH-DAY.



THE CADI AND CARPET-MENDER.

LONDON:

GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Ally's Birth-Day.

'Ally, Al, come here; quick!—where's Alice? Mama wants her;' cried George Taylor, a little boy of seven years old, rushing into the nursery, and looking round the room in search of his eldest sister.

'Ally and Bertie are in the garden,' said his cousin Helen, who was reading at an open window. 'I see them though; they're coming now, George.'

George, who was evidently brimful of something very important, flew to the door to catch Alice the moment she came in.

'You must come to mama this very moment, Al, in the dining-room, and tell her what you want to do on your birth-day.'

At the word birth-day, Helen shut her book, little Mary threw down her doll, and even Charlie, or, as he was more usually called, 'baby,' stopped in the middle of the Chinese wall he was building with his bricks.

'Oh! Alice,' cried Helen, 'ask aunt to let you have a throne in the bower; and we'll make a procession, and kneel down with our presents, just like we did on Mary's birth-day.'

'No, no,—not the bower,' exclaimed her brother Herbert,—'I know what's best, Al; ask aunt to take us up on the hills, and let's carry the tea-kettle, and George and I go down to the well for water, and get the sticks to light the fire, like we did with cousin Frank,—*that's* the best fun.'

'I know, I know, Ally,—have a feast in the nursery,' cried little Mary. 'Mama will give us some strawberries, and there's your big cake. You can be Mrs. Smith, and we'll all come to your house to tea, like we did to Nelly's last time.'

'Nonsense, Mary,—I mean you forget that Nelly's birth-day was in the winter, and so we couldn't go on the hills, and were forced to have a feast,' said Alice. 'What do *you* say, George? you haven't voted.'

'*I* say the hills, to be sure, and that's what mama thought you'd choose: isn't it mama?'—turning to Mrs. Taylor, who had just come in.

'Oh yes! the hills,' cried all the children together, 'because of the rolling-place. Mary may roll now, mayn't she mama? You said she wasn't old enough last summer.'

'I don't think Mary will roll, but she will like to look at you. There's another reason besides in favour of the hills—papa's going to Stourton on Wednesday morning, and we'll ask Mrs. Parkes to come and meet us, with Harry and Fanny.'

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'And papa will come back with them, perhaps,' said Alice. 'Oh! the hills, mama, please, for certain.'

Mrs. Taylor went back to the dining-room as soon as this was settled; and while the nursery-party are talking the matter over amongst themselves, I must take the opportunity of making them better known to my young readers.

Alice, the eldest, whose birth-day was coming the next day but one, would then be eight years old. George, as I have already said, was seven, little Mary four and a-half, and Charlie, or baby, just two.

Helen and Herbert, or, as they were commonly called, Nelly and Bertie, were the children of Mrs. Taylor's sister who was living with her husband in India. Now, it is so hot in India that people are sometimes made ill by it; and children are generally sent to England to live and be educated until they are grown up and strong. It was, therefore, a great comfort to Mr. and Mrs. Rowlandson to know that their little boy and girl would have such a nice home as Ashfield, during the years they were obliged to remain in India. At the time I am speaking of, Helen was between seven and eight, and Herbert exactly a year younger. They had been at Ashfield nearly four years, and could remember nothing hardly before they came there. Herbert fancied papa was tall, but couldn't tell why, and Helen was sure he used to

put her on his back, and creep about on the floor; but she couldn't imagine what his face was like. Both remembered that mama had a great many curls; and that she used to sing to them when they were going to sleep.

But where is Ashfield? is the next question I shall be asked; and what is it? a town, or a village, or only a house?

Ashfield is one of the prettiest villages in the West of England, standing at the foot of a chain of hills which reach back almost to the sea. Close by runs a beautiful little stream, the sound of which you can hear from Mr. Taylor's garden; indeed it is so close that the orchard slopes down to its bank.

In this garden and orchard, the children had some delightful games—'hide and seek,' —'follow the leader,' and I don't know what besides. In the summer, when it was too warm to run about, they made paper boats, and let them float on the water; or else sat on the bank, watching the little minnows darting about in the stream, and telling tales, or reading some nice book.

There was a large ash-tree, which stood exactly at the corner of the orchard, and made a shady spot even in the hottest part of the day. Here the children were allowed to come every morning when lessons were over, and stay until they heard the bell ring for dinner; and here they were all sitting on the morning of the birth-day

soon after breakfast, waiting for Bertie, who had remained after the rest in the dining-room.

'Here he is,' cried George, who had been peeping round the trunk of the tree —'cutting along at such a rate.'

'Good news, good news!' cried Bertie, quite out of breath between running fast and delight,—'only think! we're not going after dinner, like we did last time; but going to take dinner, and have it on the grass.'

'Oh, how nice!' 'Oh, that will be jolly!' 'Who told you so?' 'Did mama say so?' were the exclamations that followed.

'Aunt told me so herself: no, I mean I heard her tell Sarah she must pack the veal-pie by eleven o'clock, so we're sure to be off then.'

'How I wish 'twere eleven o'clock now! What shall we do till the time comes?' asked Helen.

'Have a game at hare and hounds,' suggested George.

'No, that would make us too tired to go up the hills,' said Alice. 'Let's sit still and read, or else talk. How I wish mama would come out, and stay here till eleven o'clock.'

'Here aunt is, then;' rejoined Bertie, who had not sat down, and was standing with his back to the rest.

'Well, my little girl, what do you want mama for?' asked Mrs. Taylor.

'Come and sit here please, mama,' said Alice. 'You must sit by me, because it's my birth-day, you know.'

'Very well,' said her mother, seating herself between Alice and Nelly, while the two boys placed themselves at her feet, 'this is very cozy and very nice; but what was it you wanted me for?'

Alice coloured — 'Do you remember, mama, last year we talked in the bower, —only you and I, by ourselves? I was thinking just now how happy that birth-day was; and then I wished you would say something like it this morning before we go.'

'Do you recollect what we talked of last year, Alice?' asked Mrs. Taylor.

'The story you told me, mama, about the little girl, who worked in her garden, and new flowers came in it every year; and the two boys who never touched theirs, and so all the plants died.'

'Where did the new flowers come from?' asked Bertie, 'who put them in—the little girl?'

'Oh, no,' said Alice, 'that's the thing. She took care of what was growing, and then one night, every year, when she was asleep —the night before her birth-day, shouldn't you think, mama?—the master of the garden sent somebody to put in another flower; and when she went out in the morning there she saw it, looking so beautiful.'

'And when the garden was full of flowers, what did she do then?' asked George,

'Oh, before it was full, she went to live in the place where the flowers came from. Then her brothers were sorry because she was gone, and began to mind their gardens that they might go there too; and they did, didn't they, mama?'

'I think so, my love: but I don't remember that part of the story so well as the others.'

'Hasn't it got a meaning, aunt, like the Pilgrim's Progress?' inquired Helen.

'Has it, mama; what is it?' said George.

'It *has* a meaning, but I leave you to find out what. I am sure you can make it out between you.'

'I think I know about the garden,' replied Alice, 'it means all the things we ought to do; and doing what you tell us to do is working in it. But I can't think what the flowers are that come afterwards.'

'Holidays', suggested Bertie, 'going on the hills.'

'Is it any thing about being happy?' asked George.

'I know, I know, aunt,' cried Helen. 'It's like learning to read, isn't it!'

'I'm sure, by mama's face, that's right,' observed George.

'I must know what Nelly means before *I* can be sure,' said Mrs. Taylor.

'Don't you know, aunt, what little words we began with,—'go' and 'if,' and words of two letters? Then we got bigger ones, and bigger ones again, until we could

read all that were in the book. Isn't that like the little girl's garden.'

'Not exactly like, my love, but near enough to help you to understand the story. Can you see now why the flowers came, Alice?'

'Oh yes, mama, it's much easier now. I think it means that when we've done anything good, we know the way to do more, and then another flower comes for us to take care of.'

The other children nodded their heads in approval, and Alice went on:

'I should like, mama, to make some flower grow by next birth-day; and then, when we sit here after breakfast, we can talk about the story again. I shall try to do things without your telling me so often —can't I finish Susan Grant's pinafore the while?—it's only to hem the arm-holes —and take it to her before we go.'

'Yes, let's all have something to do by next year,' said Helen; 'I'll try not to be cross with any body, and Bertie'——

'Stop, let Bertie think for himself,' said Mrs. Taylor.

'I won't kick when nurse brushes my hair.'

'You mean you won't be passionate,' replied his aunt, 'now, George!'

'I won't always have the game that *I* like; but let Bertie and the girls choose oftener.'

'Very well,' said Mrs. Taylor; 'the

thing now is to remember what we have been talking of just at the moment you feel inclined to do wrong. And now, if you want to finish your pinafore, Alice, there's no time to be lost ; and while you're about it Nelly and I will go and pack the basket.'

By eleven o'clock they were all ready ; and a funny party they looked as they passed through the village. First came the children's grand favourite, Bruno, a large Newfoundland dog, then the two eldest boys, with enormous walking-sticks, and woollen shawls twisted round their waists. Next followed Selim, the pony, on which rode Helen and a large tea-kettle. Close behind was the donkey, with its Spanish-saddle, in which Mary and Charlie were nodding very comfortably at one another. A step behind these came nurse, with an immense green umbrella in one hand, and with the other helping Joseph, a lad of the village, to carry the provision-basket. The procession was brought up by Mrs. Taylor and Alice, each carrying a basket of fruit.

It was rather a fatiguing walk ; but at last they reached the rolling-place, where they all sat down for a time. After turning the pony and donkey away to graze, the boys rushed off to the well for the water for dinner, and on their way back met Mrs. Taylor, with Mrs. Parkes and her children, coming up the hill from Stourton.

The arrival of so large a party was the

occasion of much cheering, and preparations for dinner commenced in good earnest. Many delightful discoveries were made; but the best of all was, that there were neither knives nor plates, so that the veal-patties and currant-tarts had to be eaten in their fingers.

Dinner over, the children applied themselves to the business of the day—namely, rolling; a process which some of my young readers may not have seen, and which, for their benefit, I will describe.



At the top of a short, grassy slope sit the grown-up people of the party, who tie the young ladies' petticoats round their ankles with handkerchiefs, and then, as they lie on the grass, give them a push, sending their brothers after in about half a minute. Now the going down is easy enough; not so the coming up again: for

the girls think it would be poor fun to untie the handkerchief, and put it on again every time. Their brothers, impatient as they are to get on, make it a point of honour not to leave them without help; and so, between eagerness and bandages, the whole party go tumbling about,—now up, and now down, now forwards, and now backwards,—to the extreme delight of little Charlie, who claps his hands at every fresh attempt, and considers the whole scene got up for his especial entertainment.

When papa and mama thought there had been enough of this,—for it would have been useless to wait until the children were tired,—the handkerchiefs were taken off, and the difficult question came:—what should they do next?

'Anybody ready to go home with me?' asked Mr. Taylor, mounting his horse, and preparing to depart.'

'Oh papa! can't you stay to tea?' said Alice. 'Can't you this once, because it's my birth-day?'

'No, my little woman, not even because it's your birth-day can I leave my duty undone,' replied her father.

'That's how papa works in *his* garden,' thought Alice to herself; and I suppose the people he cures are his flowers.'

'Good-bye, papa, good-bye,' cried all the children, as he turned round and waved his hand at the brow of the hill.

'Come, now, don't lose so much time

let's be doing *something*,' exclaimed Fanny Parkes, an active little girl, a few months older than Alice.

'Well, what shall it be?' said the latter.

'Hare and hounds' was the cry of one, 'hide and seek,' exclaimed another, 'follow the leader,' said a third; and so they went on, until George, who had been the loudest of all, suddenly remembering his good resolution, said, 'No, no, Alice; it's your birthday, you ought to choose.'

'Yes, let Alice choose, Alice shall choose,' cried all the children together.

She did so: and contrived that everybody should have their favourite game before they were too tired to play any longer. When this happened, they went back to the rolling-place, to see what had been going on there. They found that their mothers had gone away looking for flowers, and that nurse was preparing to light the fire for tea, while Charlie and Mary tumbled about on the grass.

George and Bertie begged that the fire might be left entirely to them, having a notion that they could make it, as they had heard the Indians did, by rubbing two sticks together. Nurse, on the other hand, neither understanding nor admiring such outlandish practices, took out a lucifer-box which she gave to Bertie to hold for a moment. The matter had been argued several times, and George had run away to the rest, when Bertie exclaimed, 'Now, do

nurse wait a minute, and let me have this one try,—I've got two such capital sticks.'

'I tell you what 'tis, Master Bertie,—if we stop till your fire burns, we may wait till to-morrow breakfast time. And there's your mama will be back in a minute, and dear baby's wanting his tea, so give me the lucifer-box, that's a good boy.'

But Bertie was not a good boy, and instead of giving up the box held it fast. Having asked for it once more, nurse took it out of his hand, whereupon he threw himself down on the grass, kicking and roaring with all his might.

'O Bertie!' cried Helen, running up to him, 'how can you be naughty to-day?—it will vex Alice.'

'It's all nurse's fault,' blubbered Master Bertie, 'she's so cross she won't let me try to make a fire.'

'I'm sure I've no objection to your making a fire, now I've got my kettle on,' replied nurse.

'But it's the fire for tea I wanted to make,' sobbed Bertie, bursting out afresh: 'I don't care for any other fire. Oh dear! how unkind you are.'

'Bertie dear,' whispered his sister, as she stooped down beside him, 'why didn't you come away when George did. Then you wouldn't have forgot what you promised aunt this morning. Now jump up and kiss nurse before the rest come that's a dear.'

Bertie lay still and rubbed his eyes a few moments; but at last got up pretty cheerfully, and went towards nurse, who, seeing he looked both sorry and ashamed, kissed him kindly, and said no more.

After this, every thing went on very pleasantly. I need not describe how much bread and butter was eaten, and how many cups of tea were drunk. Those of my readers who have had tea out of doors can imagine it for themselves, and those who have not, would never believe it if I told them. The donkey-party, under the care of nurse, were sent on, the moment tea was over; and the others, having taken leave of the Parkes-es, whose road home lay a different way, prepared to follow at seven o'clock. Bruno, considering himself slighted,—and not without reason, for the children had been too busy with each other to pay much attention to him,—insisted on keeping in the middle all the way home, in order that he might be patted and spoken to from time to time. Selim, too, without seeking it, received a great deal more attention than he had done in the morning. *Then*, every body was unwilling to ride, and when Helen got off, there was only her aunt or Alice to take her place; *now*, the boys made the discovery, all of a sudden, that Selim liked having two on his back better than one; and, as far as they themselves were concerned, were decidedly of opinion that it was great fun riding double.

'There's papa, I declare,' cried George, as the pony turned out of a lane on the open hill-side, 'there he is, look! at the bottom of the hill, just coming round the corner.'

'Oh, papa, we had such capital fun after you went away—such a glorious game at follow the leader. I led them round by the plantation, and up to the wishing-gate, and back again by the stone stile; and Al stuck upon the top of it, and couldn't get down, one side or the other, till we went back and helped her.'

'O papa, it's been such a nice day altogether,' said Alice, as she wished him good-night. 'Not only fun, you know, but we thought of such nice things this morning. Mama will tell you what I mean—good-night, dear papa.'

About four o'clock one afternoon, a week or so after the holiday just described, Mrs. Taylor opened the door of the dining-room, where the children were preparing their lessons for the next day, with an invitation—'Come children, I want any of you that are ready, to help me to pick raspberries for preserving; the others may come to us as soon as they have finished their lessons.

Helen jumped up directly,—'I've just found the last place I was looking for in the map—I'm ready now, aunt.'

'Mama, I haven't nearly finished the sum you set me,' said Alice, sorrowfully. 'What

a pity pussy came into the room—she's hindered me so !'

'You mean what a pity you stopped to play with her, my love,' answered her mother, 'for, if you hadn't, I don't see how she could have hindered you.'

Alice blushed, and looked at her sum, to see whereabouts she was, for pussy had put it quite out of her head. She found that the lines already done had been rubbed out, through leaning her arm on the slate whilst looking at pussy, and that she must begin it over again.

This was a terrible disappointment; for if there was one thing Alice liked better than another,—always excepting talking under the ash-tree,—it was gathering fruit after lessons were over, especially when mama was with them.

'If I had but stopped playing with pussy when Nelly did, I should have been ready by this time,' she said to herself—'Now, they'll have gathered, oh, they'll have gathered a big dish full by the time I get out. What a pity! for this is the last time mama's going to make preserve this year. I heard her saying so to Sarah yesterday.'

From these sad thoughts Alice was roused by Helen, who came up to her with her bonnet on. 'Make haste, Al, dear. Oh, 'tisn't half such a big sum as I thought it was. Make haste, and you'll be out by the time we've done the first row, I dare say.'

How different the sum looked to Alice

directly after these cheering words; she could hardly believe it was the same. Only stopping to give Helen a kiss, she leant forward on the table, determined not to look at any thing, or think of any thing, until it was done.

This plan succeeded so well, that she got on to her own astonishment: in fact, the sum was finished, and Alice in the garden before the big dish was three parts full.

'That's right, here's Ally,' cried all the children together, as she ran up to the bushes, and placed herself between her mama and cousin.

'How quick you've been,' said the latter, 'quicker even than I thought you could be when I came out.'

'The time has passed pleasantly,' observed Mrs. Taylor, 'and that makes it seem shorter. Still, you've been very quick, my little girl, and I'm pleased to find you can command your attention when you try.'

'O mama, I wish I'd tried sooner though! It was just like getting out of bed when nurse calls us. I kept on thinking I'll only have this one turn more, and when I'd had it, I thought I'd just have another, and so I kept on. How hard it is, mama, just to begin any thing: it's nothing at all when that's done.'

Her mother agreed that it *was* very hard, and comforted Alice by saying, she often found it so herself.

'You, mama?' replied Alice, 'do you

mean to say you think you'll get out of bed ever so many times before you do? I thought it was only children that did that.'

'It *ought* to be only children,' said her mother, smiling: 'but I'm afraid we all do it sometimes, and a great many other things like it.'

'But aunt,' said Bertie, 'nobody tells you to get up, so 'tisn't naughty to stay in bed.'

'Bertie, Bertie,' rejoined both the girls, —'wouldn't it be naughty not to get up at seven o'clock even if nurse didn't call us?'

'Yes,' said George, 'but that's because we've been told to get up at seven other mornings: would it be naughty if we hadn't?'

Alice had nothing to say in reply, but she looked far from satisfied, and turned to her mother.

'You want me to explain it, my love, I see—first try if you can't find it out for yourself.'

After a long pause, during which all the party looked grave, Alice suddenly exclaimed, 'Mama I nearly know: thinking of my birth-day has put it into my head. You and papa, have gardens like ours.'—'Bigger ones,' interrupted George.

'Yes, bigger ones, and you work as hard as we do, *because* they are so big.'

'Yes,' interposed Helen, 'it's like Thomas digging a whole bed while George and Bertie only do a tiny piece with their trowels.'

'But Thomas is used to it, and we are not,' replied George, not greatly admiring the example his cousin had chosen.

'That's what I mean,' said Helen: 'and so uncle and aunt are able to do a great deal more than we, because they're older, and that's why their garden is so big.'

'O mama, how nice it all comes!' cried Alice. 'Thomas doesn't do what he likes, but asks you first what he shall put in the beds; and so you do what God says, and then you tell us, just as Thomas shows the boys.'

'Now, then, Bertie,' said his aunt, 'you see why it's wrong not to get up, even if we haven't been bid. It isn't only being *told* to do it that makes any thing a duty, but *the knowing of ourselves that we ought.* So, if grown-up people have no one to tell them what they should do, it is because they know it very well of themselves. For instance, God sends us all into the world to work and be industrious; and so we know it must be wrong to lie in bed after we have had sleep enough, even if nobody ever told us so.'

'Yes,' said Alice, 'it's like when I stay up sometimes after nine, and you haven't told me that I may. After the clock strikes, it isn't like it was before; because I think you meant to tell me to go, only you forgot it.'

'Forgot what?' asked Mr. Taylor, coming up just in time to hear the last word—

'tea time I should think: it's ever so much after six.'

'Mama, shall I run on and tell them to bring in tea by the time you're in?' asked Alice.

'No, no, wait a bit,' said her father, 'and we'll all go in together.' He smiled, as he said so, and took Alice by the hand, and they all went on very quietly until they came to the dining-room door; but on reaching this, a loud shout was set up by the foremost, who happened to be Bertie, and a cry, which was soon echoed by the others, of 'cousin Frank: cousin Frank's come!'



Yes: there cousin Frank really was—peeping out from behind the door, in his impatience to see if the children were coming, instead of sitting still, as Mr. Taylor had admonished him to do, at the other end of the room, so as not to be seen until they were all in. However, it made very little difference in the end. The shouting could not well have been louder, or the hugging more hearty. If anything, perhaps there was a little too much of the latter, for the unfortunate stranger was so completely borne down by his affectionate friends who clung to his neck, and twisted themselves about him, like so many little serpents, that his rescue could only be effected by the combined efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, who conducted him safely to the table, where it was made unlawful to lay hands upon him again until after tea.

The children discovered, to their great satisfaction, that he hadn't been above ten minutes in the house, having ridden home from C—, with Mr. Taylor, who knew he was coming, and met him at the Station with the gig.

'That's why papa was in such a hurry, then,' said Alice to her cousin.

'Yes: and why he asked us all what he should bring us home,' replied Nelly.

The rest of the evening was spent in visiting all the out-of-door places; and this was a longer business than any one would suppose; for, as the party were much too

happy to have anything like method in their doings, they were continually going backwards and forwards, as some fresh thought occurred to them. Helen was shocked to find that they had quite forgotten the rabbits, and insisted on going back before they went into the orchard; but George assured her that the dogs had also been lost sight of, which was a great deal worse.

This arrival, I need hardly say, made a change in the family: it being the established custom whenever cousin Frank came, as he never staid very long, to set aside lessons, excepting drawing, which he liked to teach them; and the few minutes before breakfast, which they called their 'happy time,' when their mama told them stories out of the bible, or explained pictures, and talked about them.

How, then, did they spend the long summer day? In more ways than children who have not lived in the country could ever imagine. In the first place, there were the chickens and rabbits to be seen to, as usual, between breakfast and prayers. Afterwards there was generally a long drawing lesson, and then a good scamper over the garden and orchard, which often ended in cousin Frank's fetching his colour-box and sketch-book, and establishing himself under the ash-tree, where they all sat very comfortably until somebody came, or until they heard the bell ring for dinner.

But what did they talk of all this time! If I could give you any notion of the number of things they thought and spoke of, I should be clever indeed. Sometimes, the subject was the wonders of London, which their cousin dearly loved to describe, and of which he brought a fresh account every year. Sometimes, they discussed the books they had lately been reading or hearing, and remarked on the people they liked best in them. Sometimes—and this was best of all—cousin Frank would suddenly think of some story that had delighted him as a child, and remember it for them as well as he could. One morning, they had been learning a great many different things, and for once were nearly tired of wonders. George had just asked the question he was accustomed to ask about twice a-day. 'Cousin Frank, when shall you go to Italy?' and had received the usual answer, 'I don't know for certain, old boy, but I suppose next year;' and this had brought the customary look of sorrow on the faces of the children, for they couldn't bear to think of losing their cousin's visit, when he remembered all at once a story he had never yet told them, which, indeed, he had so nearly forgotten that he doubted if he should be able to relate it.

'Oh yes! I'm sure you will—do try, do try,' cried all the children; for the very mention of a story had turned the sad faces into smiling ones, and eager and

delighted looks were fixed on their cousin, as they exclaimed,—'do try; do begin!'

'Well, I'll begin directly: but mind it won't be like the one I told you last. I remembered that very well; but this fellow I'd nearly forgot altogether.'

'Wait a minute, please, cousin Frank,' said Helen, coming closer to his knees, and turning round so that she might see the story in his face, as well as hear it in his voice.

'Come Al,' putting her arm round her waist, 'now that's right,—now begin directly please, cousin Frank.'

'All right?' he inquired. The children all nodded. 'Very well,'—here goes then:

'Once upon a time,'—But here he was interrupted by a loud shout, expressing their delight and approbation at so very orthodox and proper a commencement. Much was expected from a story that began so well, and Helen gave it as her opinion, in a whisper to Alice, that it would be better than the last, for *that* only began with,—'there was once a man.'

When quiet was restored, their cousin went on:—

'Once upon a time, in a country a long way from England, there lived two men, who were very great friends. Now, these men were Mahometans,—that is to say, they had been taught to believe in a prophet, named Mahomet, and to read a book he wrote for them called the Koran, and

had never heard of Jesus Christ and the Bible.'

'Now, one of the things that the Koran tells all who believe in it to do, is to go on pilgrimage at least once in their lives. But first, do you remember what I told you a long time ago about pilgrims?'

'O yes!' cried Alice, 'about men going all across the world, such a long way to see the manger that Christ slept in when he was a little baby.'

'And about their picking flowers and bringing them home to show the people where they'd been,' said Helen.

'Gathering palm branches, you mean: yes, I see you've not forgotten it. Well, just in the same way as christians used to think the best thing they could do was to visit the places where Christ lived and died, so these Mahometans consider it to be their duty to go and see the place where Mahomet is buried; and all of them that are good and pious can't feel happy at the thought of dying till they've been.'

'But what good does it do them?' interrupted George.

'What good does it do you when you've been obedient and done what you were told? It's just the same thing.'

'But'——

'Now don't George,' intreated all three of the children at once, 'do stop till the story's finished.'

'Well, then, we go back to the two men

who were such very good friends. Now, it happened that both of them were merchants—you know what that means? Not that they kept shops, and had signs over their doors, but that they sent ships and camels into all the countries round about, to sell some things and buy others. One of these merchants was called Hassan, and the other Selim: and Hassan being a pious man, had been thinking a long time about going on pilgrimage. Well, after turning the matter over in his mind a great many times, he said to himself one day, 'it's no use putting it off any longer; I'll begin to prepare to go at once.''

'Hadn't he any wife to pack up his things?' asked Alice.

'Not that I know of; but it wasn't packing up his things that gave him most trouble; it was how to keep his money safe till he came back again.'

'But why didn't he take it with him? inquired George.

'Because the country he had to pass through was very different from this, and instead of good roads and quiet people, he was going across great plains of sand, where there wasn't a house to be seen for hundreds of miles, and where robbers would come out from their hiding places, troops of them together, and beat travellers, and take away every thing they had.'

'I don't think I could ever be a pilgrim,' said Alice.

'Not unless you believed, as Hassan did, that it was your duty, and that you *ought*. —Well, as I said before, he couldn't tell what to do with his money.

'Why didn't he make a hole in his garden?' observed Bertie, 'and put it down there very deep; that's what *I'd* have done.'

'I suppose he was afraid people might dig there, and find it. However, now that you know what he *didn't* do, perhaps you would like me to tell you what he did.'

'First, he sold every thing he had, and took all the money he got by this, and all that he had before, and went and bought a large diamond with it.'

'*One* diamond! only one diamond with all his money! wasn't he a rich man?'

He was—a very rich man—and he could sell this diamond again when he came home, and get all the money back that he gave for it.

'He bought it because 'twas so small he could hide it away, didn't he, cousin Frank?' inquired Helen—'but suppose he lost it?'

'Oh, suppose he was to!' cried all the children.

'Well, in order that he might not, he went and got a man to make him a cashmere bag, that is a bag of very fine soft stuff, and the diamond was put in before the bag was sown up, and the stuff was so fine, and so cleverly made, that you couldn't

open it to get out the diamond, without its being seen,'

'What a capital plan! but where did he put it, cousin Frank? I hope 'twas in a safe place.'

'As soon as every thing was ready for starting, he went to his friend Selim, and told him what he had done, and showed him the cashmere bag: and then he said he had brought it to him to keep while he was away, because he knew he would take care of it, and give it safely back.'

'This Selim promised to do; and, after saying good-by to each other very affectionately, they parted; and Hassan joined a company of pilgrims, who were going to set off that very day.'

'And did he come home again all safe?'

'He came home again all safe: and of course the first thing he did, was to go to Selim for his diamond. Selim appeared delighted to see him, and gave him the cashmere bag, which he carried home. But when he came to open it,—which you may be sure he did when no one was near, imagine how surprised he felt at finding that the diamond was gone.'

'Gone!' exclaimed all the children—'you said it couldn't be taken out of the bag without being found out.'

'So I did, for so Hassan believed at the time: but you see he was mistaken, as people are apt to be.'

'Cousin Frank,' asked Helen, 'did Selim

know the diamond was taken away when he gave it him back ?'

When he gave the bag back, you mean. Why, at first Hassan thought he couldn't: so he went and told him of it, and asked if he had given it to any other person to keep. But Selim flew into a passion directly, and declared the diamond was in the bag when he returned it; and then Hassan felt pretty sure in his own mind, that he was the thief. Still, as no one was by when he opened the bag, he couldn't make other people believe his story; especially as Selim was always thought an honest man, and bore as good a character as Hassan himself.'

'Poor Hassan! what *did* he do ?' cried Alice.

'Gave Selim a good thrashing, I hope,' said George.

'Perhaps he would, if he had seen how that was to get back his diamond; but, as he didn't, he thought of something else.'

'In the country in which they lived there was a magistrate, called the Cadi, who governed the people, and told them what to do. The Cadi at this time was a good and wise man, and Hassan could think of nothing better than to go and tell his story to him.'

'And what did the Cadi say ?'

'He listened very attentively, and made Hassan tell him how the bag was fastened, and where it had been kept, and every

thing else about it. Then he told him to say nothing to anybody, but go home and be quiet until he sent for him.'

'What was he going to do?' said Alice.

'To make Selim tell him where he'd put the diamond, to be sure,' answered Helen.

'Or else to send him to prison till it was found,' suggested George.

'But supposing he *hadn't* taken it—and 'twas impossible to be quite sure—that would have been very unjust. No, the first thing was to make sure that he had: and this was what the Cadi set about forthwith.'

'What did he do? do make haste,' cried the impatient Helen.

'Wait a bit—I must explain something first.'

'You know that the people in these Eastern countries are not accustomed to sit upright on chairs, as we do, but recline—that is lean back—on carpets and cushions piled one on another. You know, too, that these carpets are more beautiful than ours, and cost a great deal more money. One thing besides—the Cadi or chief man, whatever he may be called, does exactly as he pleases to every body; and if any of his servants offend him in any way, he has only to speak the word, and their heads may be taken off in a minute.'

'Now, then, if you remember all this, you'll be able to understand what's coming. You recollect where we were?'

'The Cadi was going to find out if Selim had got the diamond,' said Helen.

'Stop, there's one thing more I have not explained. A Mahometan church is called a mosque; and these mosques, instead of being shut every day but Sunday, are kept open always, so that people may go in and say their prayers at any time.'

'But there's nothing about the diamond in this,' interrupted George.

'Have patience, and you'll see that there is.—When the Cadi had heard Hassan's story, he went straight to church,—that is to the mosque,—part of which was kept on purpose for him, and shut in from the rest of the people. Here, instead of benches and hassocks, he had carpets to kneel on; and after saying his prayers, he took his scimitar,—that is the hooked sword they use in those countries, and cut the carpets through and through.'

'I never,—what was that for!'

'Well, the next time he went he looked about for the holes, but found they were all so beautifully mended that nobody who hadn't known it could ever have found out that the carpets had been cut. This was just what he expected; so, as soon as he got home, he sent for one of his servants,—the one whose business it was to look after these things,—and insisted on his telling him that very moment who had mended the carpets in the mosque.

'The poor fellow, who had no notion until then, that the Cadi knew any thing about it, began to tremble from head to foot,

expecting the next moment to be told that he must lose his head for having let the carpets be cut. You may suppose how delighted he was when his master never said a word about killing him; but only told him to go and fetch the man he had got to mend them, and bring him without saying who wanted him. At the same time the Cadi sent other servants for Hassan and Selim; and, as they were all three put into different rooms, none of them knew in the least what was going on. Hassan, of course, was not surprised at being sent for after what the Cadi had said. Selim thought the Cadi wanted to ask his advice about something, as he had done once or twice before. And the carpet-mender, no doubt, imagined there was another job ready for him, for which he was to be well paid.

'Well, while they are all thinking these different things, the Cadi goes up to the carpet-mender, and asks if he is the man that sowed up the Cadi's carpets in the mosque. The man says yes, and begins to be afraid; and then the Cadi looks at him with a terrible face,—just like this—(here cousin Frank, knitting his eye-brows, and rolling his eyes, made what Helen called 'his worst face of all,')—and when the man begins to shiver as if he'd got the ague, the Cadi says to him: 'tell me how long ago it was you sewed up a cashmere bag for Selim the merchant.'

'The moment the man heard this he fell down upon his face at the Cadi's feet, and begged for mercy. The Cadi promised to forgive him upon condition that he gave Hassan all the money he had been paid for keeping the secret. Then the Cadi sent for Selim, who was so terrified at the sight of the carpet-mender that he fell down upon his face, too, and offered to restore the diamond if the Cadi would forgive him.'

'And did he? I hope he chopped his head off instead,' cried George.

'George is so cruel, he wants every body to be killed,' said Alice.

'Not every body, replied George indignantly, only wicked people; and they ought to be. If I was King, or Cadi, or like that, I'd have their heads off, every one of 'em.'

'But as part of the duty of a King, or Cadi, is to make his subjects better, and so become *fit* to die before that time comes, it's quite as well that you've nothing to do with it at present,' said cousin Frank.

George looked a little disconcerted, and Bertie interposed, 'but *did* the Cadi kill him? you didn't tell us.'

'Well, this part of the story I really *have* forgotten, so you may imagine that he did or did not, just as you like. George can kill him, and Alice can reform him, and so every body will be satisfied.'

'What a nice story, cousin Frank, and how well you remember it!' said Alice.

'What a capital Cadi!' cried Helen.

How glad Hassan must have been that he went to him. There was nobody else that could find it out.'

'Do show how the Cadi looked at the carpet-mender again, cousin Frank,' said Bertie.

Cousin Frank, delighted at being asked to repeat it, went through the performance twice over, and each time it was received with a fresh burst of applause.

'I know what it's like,' said Helen. 'Like you looked when you were dressed up, and made Charlie cry so.'

'Oh yes, the night that Nelly and I were two fairies,' remarked Alice,' and one of my wings broke in the middle of the poetry I was saying.'

'I wish'—but what Alice wished remains a mystery, for at that moment the dinner-bell rang, and startled her so, that she entirely forgot what she was going to say.

'Why, I thought 'twasn't twelve o'clock yet,' exclaimed one.

'We don't seem to have been here half-an-hour, do we, cousin Frank?' said another.

'Here's mama coming to fetch us, cried Alice, who ran to meet her. And she has got a letter: I wonder who it's for?'

'For cousin Frank I guess,' said Helen. 'Yes,—so it is.'

The children kept near Mrs. Taylor while their cousin was reading the letter, and did not look at him until they were nearly at the house. Alice was the first

to do so, and she thought he looked very different from what he did in the garden.

'What's the matter, cousin Frank?'

'I must go away to-morrow morning, that's what's the matter, Al. But don't tell the rest till after dinner.'

It had to be told then—there was no help for it—and a terrible outcry the children made. But Frank was obliged to start the next morning; so, having made him promise to come again next year, and to stay a great deal longer, they took an affectionate leave of their cousin, who treated them to the Cadi's face just as they got to the door, and sent them to bed laughing heartily.



'What a stupid book this is! I can't make out a word of it,' said Alice to Nelly, as they sat preparing their lessons on the following morning.

'O, Al, hush! there, you've put the figure

I was carrying out of my head, and I must begin my sum all over again!' replied Helen, rather peevishly.

'I beg your pardon, Nelly,' said Alice, in a sorrowful voice. 'I didn't know you were thinking. Oh I wish I could understand this!'

'Understand what, my love,' asked her mother, who just then opened the door—your little history book that you used to be so fond of. You don't mean that you can't understand that?'

'Mama, this is a hard chapter:—harder than any I've ever read before.' And Alice let her arms fall on her lap in a most hopeless manner.

'Let's see whether some fairy has changed the book, or whether it's the same that it used to be. Now, Alice, begin and read this chapter to me.'

Alice did so; and as she went on, her voice by degrees became more cheerful, and her countenance less wo-begone.

'Mama: reading to you is so different—I understand it all now.'

'But I haven't told you a word or helped you one bit.'

'No, mama, but it's because you're here, and I can attend to it better.'

'You've found out, then, that the fault wasn't in the book—I'm glad of that. But Alice, my love, how was it you were not able to attend till I came.'

This was a question that Alice could not

answer to her own satisfaction ; and, like an honest child, she said so directly.

'Tell me what you were thinking of when I came in, my love ?' inquired her mother.

'Let me see—when you came in—I forget what I was thinking of at that very moment.'

'Well, *before* I came, when you were trying to understand the chapter ?'

'Oh yes, before you came—I was thinking about the ash-tree then, and thinking how nice it was sitting there yesterday, and thinking whether cousin Frank would know any fresh stories by next time.'

'And thinking what a pity it was to be in-doors doing lessons, instead of out-of-doors, listening to stories ?'

'Oh, mama ! how could you find out that ?'

'You shall see yourself how I found it out.'

'When you began to read to me did you think of what you were reading, a great deal more than when you read it to yourself ?'

'Yes, mama.'

'And did you not begin to understand it the moment you began to think of it ?'

'Yes, mama.'

'Well, then, the reason you didn't understand it before, was because you didn't think of it, and the reason you didn't think of it, was because you were thinking of something else. And having got so

far, Alice,' said her mother, smiling, 'one needn't be a magician to find out the rest.'

'But, mama, it's very hard to forget pleasure, when one's been so happy, isn't it?'

'To forget it, my love? no one wishes you to forget.'

'I mean, to be able to forget it when you want to—when your're going to do lessons.'

'It *is* difficult,' replied her mother. 'I think it's a plant that requires as much care as any that grows in our garden.'

'O mama, how odd! I've hardly thought of my garden—I mean the flowers I was to make grow by next birth-day—you know mama'—here Alice gave a very significant nod, to help out her meaning.—'I've hardly thought of them since the day cousin Frank came.'

'So I fancied, my love.'

'How could you, mama?'

'Because, if you had been thinking of that, you would not have felt the change so much. You would not have thought it such a hardship to be learning those things which are to make you useful when you are a woman. You would not have forgotten that it is by doing these daily duties cheerfully—small as they seem—that we please God. In short, my darling child, you would not have had such a 'very hard chapter,' and you would not have been forced to wait for mama.'

'Mama,' said Alice, rising up and speaking with her face close to her mother's,

'I'm so glad you put me in mind of my birth-day! I won't forget it now; I'll think of my flowers every day, and water them. Dear mama, you'll see how I shall try.'

'And Nelly—what about her?' my young readers are saying. 'It's too bad: you haven't told us whether she heard what Alice and her mama were talking of, or whether she was doing her sum all the time, and didn't listen. Besides, did she get good-tempered again?—for she was cross, you know, before Mrs. Taylor came—and what did they all do afterwards?'

'Well, I'll do my best to answer all these inquiries.'

'In the first place, Nelly *did* hear all that was said, and Mrs. Taylor was not sorry for it. She saw by Nelly's face, the moment she came in, that she had just been saying something cross, and understood the reason directly. Both had been a little spoiled by the indulgence of the last fortnight. That is to say, they had been so accustomed to be amused all day long, as to have forgotten that we cannot, and ought not to be always at play; but must sometimes work, even when we don't like it, because the same good Being who sends our Pleasures, has also given us all our Duties.

Helen, then, had gone on making her own remarks to herself all the time her aunt was talking to Alice.

'If Alice was lazy,' she thought, 'I was cross, and we were both naughty. What a good thing that aunt came in; perhaps, if she hadn't, we should have quarrelled, as we did that morning such a while ago!'

The thought of having just escaped the danger of quarrelling with Alice, her dear kind Alice, went to Nelly's heart more than anything.

All the time her cousin was making *her* resolution aloud, she was saying the same things over to herself; and when she went up afterwards and kissed her aunt, and clung to Alice's neck, they both understood what she meant as well as if she had told them.

'It isn't raining Al, it's quite fine,' said Helen, drawing aside the window curtain, and rubbing her sleepy eyes, one summer morning.

'I'm so glad! then the black cloud rolled away after all. Papa said he thought it would.'

This anxiety of the cousins about the weather arose from the fact of its being the morning of Alice's birth-day—for, our readers must imagine that a whole year had passed away since we left them making their good resolutions. But did they *keep* them?—that's the question—for we all know that it is one thing to wish and intend to do what is difficult, and another to go on doing it

steadily day after day. In the present case, I rejoice in being able to say, the resolutions were not only made, but kept:—kept, of course with occasional short-comings; but still very well kept upon the whole.

'Well, come along, Al,' it's time you were out of bed,' cried the bustling Helen, 'you forget what lots of things we've got to do. To feed the chickens, and get the milk-thistles for the bunnies, besides packing up the frock ready for after breakfast.'

Alice jumped out of bed before she had done speaking, and they were soon dressed and down stairs. At breakfast, as soon as what Nelly called the 'happy returns' were over, Alice lost no time in proceeding to business.

'Mama, are you going to be busy this morning?'

'No, my love: why?'

'Because, mama, if you are not, don't you remember what we said we'd do last birth-day?

'Oh! you mean the ash-tree. Yes, I shall be ready to go there by the time you come back from the village.'

How happy Alice was this morning, packing up a little frock she had just finished making for Susan Grant. You see she has made a great step since last year—it was only a pinafore then: now, it is a frock.

It is true that her mamma had placed it, and done the gathering, but Alice had managed all the rest by herself; and, as

you may suppose, she was not a little proud of her performance. The best part of it was that it had been done from beginning to end without any telling or reminding. Every day she had taken it up regularly and done a little, in that steady way which ensures things being done, and *well* done.

Susan Grant's delight at the present was great—greater even than Alice had expected : which is saying a good deal, as we all know young benefactors are apt to entertain expectations which even the most grateful sometimes fail to satisfy.

The moment they came back from the village, the cousins hastened to the orchard, where they found Mrs. Taylor, with George and Bertie, walking up and down until they came.

'Oh, thank you, mama, for not sitting down without us. Now we'll be cozy—mama, this is your place.'



Mrs. Taylor seated herself, according to Alice's wish, on the self-same root of the ash-tree that she sat upon last year; and the children, taking care to keep their own places, very soon grouped themselves about her.

'Mama,' Alice began, 'you recollect that morning after cousin Frank went away when you came in and explained my history?'

'Yes, my love.'

'Don't you think it was a good thing I was naughty that morning, mama? I mean that I hadn't been attending till you came.'

'A good thing that you were *naughty*, Al,' cried Bertie, to whom this was a new way of looking at such matters,—'a *good* thing that you were naughty—whatever do you mean?'

'*You* know what I mean, mama,—don't you?'

'I suppose it is that what I said then made you think of to-day: and, as I should not have spoken of it unless you had been inattentive, you think it a good thing that you were so?'

'Yes, mama, that's it exactly.

'But Al,' interposed Nelly, 'if you had been good before, aunt wouldn't have wanted to tell you, and so 'twould have been just the same.'

Alice, however, did not think so. She was sure the thought of the birth-day had caused *more* goodness than could ever have

come without it: and her mama agreed with her that, as this was the case, every thing had happened for the best. After this there was a pause in the conversation —Nelly, as usual, was the first to speak.

'Aunt,' she inquired, 'do you think we've all done what we said we would, and made our flowers grow?—I know Alice has. And George is a great deal kinder: he let us have hide and seek the other day, when he wished for blindman's-buff. And Bertie—nurse says he's been very good: he hasn't stamped once for a whole month.'

'And I'm sure you havn't been cross for a good many months, Nelly,' cried George.

'No, indeed; exclaimed Alice, 'it's so long ago, I can't remember the last time.'

'My dear children,' said Mrs. Taylor, looking fondly round her, 'to hear you all answering for one another in this way is better than any thing I can say. Still, I must tell you that I agree with you all; and that your remarks on one another are as true as they are kind. I don't mean that now and then I have not seen you all giving way to naughty feelings; but much oftener you have tried to conquer them, and succeeded.

There is one thing more that has made me very happy; and that is, you have not only taken care of your own flowers, but have also learned the way to help one another. Now, let us all try again this year how much we can do. Try how many

kind words we can say to one another,—how many right but difficult things we can do cheerfully and gladly, so that they may be pleasing to our Father in heaven, who helps by his Spirit those who ask Him. And then, my darling children, when the time comes for our earthly gardens to be left empty, that Father who is so full of love, will send his angel to fetch us home to Him; and we shall live with Him in those better gardens which are too beautiful to be described, but where we know that all the sweet flowers that have ever grown in this world are brought together, and continue in blossom for ever.

DEAR LITTLE PEOPLE:

Perhaps you know that it is often the custom in *grown-up* books, for the person who writes to shake hands, as it were, at the end with those who read. I don't see why we shouldn't do the same, and say a few kind words one to another.

My say is soon said; for it is simply this: I hope you will have as much pleasure in reading about Alice and Nelly, and the rest of the Ashfield people, as It have had in writing about them. There were many things besides that I wanted to tell you; but I couldn't find time or room for any more now. Perhaps, if you look into some future number of these 'Stories for Summer Days and Winter Nights,' you will find more about Ashfield, and I shall then have the pleasure of shaking hands with you again.

Meantime, I bid you all very kindly

GOOD-BYE!

RICHARD BARRETT, Printer, 13, Mark Lane.

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